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Fifty-ninth year

Provisional

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Thursday, 6 May 2004, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Akram	(Pakistan)
Members:	Algeria	Mr. Benmehidi
	Angola	Mr. Gaspar Martins
	Benin	Mr. Adechi
	Brazil	Mr. Sardenberg
	Chile	Mr. Maquieira
	China	Mr. Zhang Yishan
	France	Mr. Duclos
	Germany	Mr. Trautwein
	Philippines	Mr. Baja
	Romania	Mr. Motoc
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. King
	United States of America	Mr. Holliday

Agenda

Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287)

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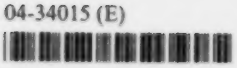

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of May, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute on behalf of the Council to Ambassador Gunter Pleuger, Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Council for the month of April 2004. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Pleuger for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Letter dated 31 March 1998 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Papua New Guinea to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1998/287)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Fiji, Japan, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea, in which they request to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the discussion, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea) took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations and in the absence of objection, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I invite Mr. Türk to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Danilo Türk, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs. I give him the floor.

Mr. Türk: At the last briefing, on 15 December 2003, I informed the Council that the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the Bougainville Resistance Force agreed on the destruction of all contained weapons. I am pleased to inform the Council today that at the meeting of the Peace Process Consultative Committee held on 17 December 2003, that agreement was transformed into a binding resolution.

At the same briefing of 15 December, the Council supported the Secretary-General's recommendation to downsize the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville and to name its successor the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB). UNOMB has been given a mandate to monitor, among other things, weapons destruction and the Bougainville constitutional process. The Mission is also expected, in accordance with its mandate and the amended Papua New Guinea Constitution, to verify and to certify that the level of security is conducive to holding elections.

Before I update the Council on this and other recent developments, I would like to express our satisfaction that the new Mission — the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, headed since 1 March 2004 by Mr. Tor Stenbock — is working in close cooperation and consultation with the national Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville leaders. I would also like to use this opportunity today to commend the excellent work done in the position of Head of the Mission by the former Director, Mr. Noel Sinclair.

I would like to proceed to the update on weapons disposal. The stage III decision on the final fate of the weapons contained a provision that allowed ex-combatants, unit commanders and communities themselves to decide on the exact date and method of destruction. The United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville made full use of that flexibility by decentralizing the process of weapons destruction. As a

result, the Mission has succeeded in greatly expediting weapons destruction. In its publicized messages to the communities of Bougainville, UNOMB emphasized the full implementation of the Peace Agreement as the way to autonomy and lasting peace in Bougainville.

To date, 1,588 pieces of contained weapons — 81 per cent of the arsenals of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and the Bougainville Resistance Force — have been destroyed. UNOMB has already certified that five of ten Bougainville districts have completed the weapons disposal programme. The destruction of the weapons has been accompanied by ceremonies that have been used as opportunities to promote awareness of the peace process across the island. We would like to note that the actual destruction of weapons has been carried out by the Bougainvilleans under UNOMB supervision.

The implementation of the weapons disposal programme represents significant progress for the people of Bougainville, who have suffered enormously as a consequence of the fighting, which ended several years ago. Their decision to make Bougainville weapons-free is a courageous act that deserves our highest praise and support, as are the specific steps taken recently that gave full meaning to that decision.

That also provides additional incentive for progress in the area of constitution-making. I would like to make a few references to the constitutional process.

At the Peace Process Consultative Committee meeting held on 25 February 2004, the Papua New Guinea Government provided the Bougainvillean leaders with its comments on the second draft of the Bougainville constitution. The Bougainville Constitutional Commission is working on incorporating those comments into the third and final draft of the constitution, which is expected to be produced by the end of this month. The draft would then be submitted for approval by the Bougainville Constituent Assembly in June 2004. Following its adoption by the Constituent Assembly, it would be submitted to the national Government for endorsement, which is expected to take place by the end of July. The earliest possible time frame for the elections would then be the end of November or the beginning of December 2004.

Following the completion of all constitutional phases, UNOMB will continue to consult closely with the Government of Papua New Guinea and with the parties in Bougainville regarding their intention to proceed to elections as soon as practicable. The Secretariat will come back to the Security Council to report on that matter and on progress made during the next briefing, in June 2004, prior to the expiration of UNOMB's mandate.

The Bougainville Interim Provincial Government has also begun to make preparations for the next steps in the electoral process by determining a timetable for the completion of the constitution and for elections for the autonomous Bougainville Government. The Provincial Government recently took another step towards autonomy by establishing a ministry for peace and autonomy. The new ministry will act as the Bougainville counterpart to the national Government's Bougainville Peace and Restoration Office. The ministry is also expected to ensure awareness of the peace process throughout Bougainville and to facilitate reconciliation ceremonies on the island.

I shall now say a few words about the Bougainville police. The National Executive Council delegated police powers and functions to the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government on 17 December 2003. In a further step towards autonomy, the Governor appointed the former leader of the Bougainville Resistance Force as Bougainville's first Minister of Police. In addition to the delegation of police powers, the law and justice programmes of Australia and New Zealand have further strengthened Bougainville's policing and judicial institutions. It is hoped that the programmes will, over time, help to build capacity for Bougainville's police, justice and correctional institutions. Furthermore, the Australian Federal Police plans to deploy 19 officers to Bougainville as part of an enhanced cooperation package with the Govemment of Papua New Guinea. So there has been significant progress in that domain as well.

There has also been some progress, however incremental, concerning the involvement of Francis Ona and his supporters in the peace process. On the positive side, the so-called "A" company — the dominant force in Mr. Ona's Me'ekamui Defence Force — has joined the peace process, and in April 2004 it completed destruction of its weapons. The "A" company has also been very active in conducting peace awareness meetings in the so-called no-go zone.

However, other elements of the Me'ekamui Defence Force have not contained their weapons. UNOMB has been informed that the zone's inhabitants are dissatisfied with restrictions on the freedom of their movement caused by the continued manning of the roadblocks, which inhibits access and the free flow of services and goods to the no-go zone. Regrettably, Francis Ona continues to avoid engaging in dialogue with the Bougainvillean leaders and with the national Government on this matter.

In its communications with Mr. Ona, the United Nations Observer Mission has been informing him of the most recent developments in the peace process and has been expressing its readiness to resume regular contacts with him. On the whole, we believe that progress with regard to Francis Ona has been significant and that his influence continues to be reduced.

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words about the coordination between the United Nations Observer Mission and United Nations agencies with regard to Bougainville. The Mission has continued to work in close cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UNICEF and other United Nations organizations on the practical aspects of peace-building in Bougainville. The Mission has facilitated the expansion of UNICEF's programme on Bougainville by providing political, administrative and logistical support to that agency. A delegation from UNICEF recently visited Bougainville for 10 days of workshops and meetings. UNICEF is expected to establish an office in Arawa and to employ a locally hired programme manager.

The UNDP has nearly completed preparations for the implementation of its second-phase rehabilitation programme for Bougainville, which would include assistance in agriculture, capacity-building and other areas. The UNDP is scheduled to begin recruitment of an international programme manager, who would direct the implementation of the second phase of its Bougainville programme. The cooperation between UNDP and UNOMB in consolidating their offices in Buka has led to a reduction of their operational costs.

In conclusion, I would like to commend the parties for their commitment to the steady implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and for increasingly assuming ownership of that process. It has already become a success story — a triumph of cooperative actions on the part of the successive Governments of Papa New Guinea, of the people of Bougainville, of regional partners and of a very small — but also very efficient — United Nations Mission. We call on the parties to maintain the momentum, and we urge them to redouble their efforts to finalize the Bougainville constitutional process, opening the way for the election of an autonomous Bougainville Government as soon as practicable this year. UNOMB will continue to assist them in that endeavour in every possible way.

The President: I thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his comprehensive briefing.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We are confident in your talents and in your ability to lead the Council's work. I should also like to pay a well-deserved tribute to Ambassador Gunter Pleuger and his team for an admirably efficient and professional presidency. In addition, I thank Mr. Danilo Türk for his comprehensive briefing on developments in the situation in Bougainville. We commend Ambassador Noel Sinclair and the staff of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) for the excellent work they have accomplished.

We welcome the progress made in implementing the peace process in Bougainville. After the success achieved in phase II of the weapons collection process, we have noted that phase III — which consists of eliminating the weapons — has made significant progress: more than 80 per cent of the collected weapons have been destroyed.

We welcome the efforts of the Papua New Guinea authorities to advance the constitutional process, which is now at an important stage before the holding of elections resulting in the establishment of an autonomous Government. From that perspective, we have noted the progress made in elaborating the third draft of the constitution, which will soon be submitted to the Government of Papua New Guinea so that the Constituent Assembly can be convened to approve it.

The delegation of police powers and functions to the interim Government of Bougainville is a significant development that will help to establish an atmosphere conducive to the holding of elections.

Finally, as socio-economic development of the island is essential for Bougainville's autonomy, we believe that the donor community should provide enough financial support to Bougainville to promote its economy, it being understood that participation by United Nations funds and programmes will supplement donor efforts.

In conclusion, my delegation believes that the presence of the United Nations is very necessary until the completion of the peace process. The Mission's natural exit point will be the holding of free and democratic elections and the formation of an autonomous Government. In that regard, we are open to the idea of extending UNOMB's mandate until that time.

Mr. Holliday (United States of America): Once again, Sir, I would like to offer you congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Türk for his briefing on the status of the political process and weapons disposal in Bougainville and on the work of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB).

We also appreciate the opportunity to hear the views of neighbouring States that work to promote stabilization and continue to provide development assistance in Bougainville. We would again like to express our gratitude to former Head of Mission Noel Sinclair, and we would like to thank the current Head of Mission, Tor Stenbock, for his continued efforts to facilitate the constitutional process and weapons disposal.

We appreciate the efforts of regional players in assisting development in Bougainville, in particular Australia's commitment to provide considerable financial assistance through the newly established governance and implementation fund.

The United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) has achieved considerable progress since Assistant Secretary-General Türk last reported to the Council in December 2003. We are encouraged to hear that the United Nations Mission has now overseen the disposal of 83 per cent of the contained weapons in Bougainville. We hope that weapons destruction will be completed in the near future. We are also encouraged to learn that the Papua New Guinea Government and Bougainville leaders are working on the third and final draft of the Bougainville constitution. Both parties should work to complete the constitutional process as soon as possible. It is critical that Bougainvilleans have the opportunity to decide on an autonomous government, and therefore that the parties involved set a date for elections.

Mr. Trautwein (Germany): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. We are convinced that the Council will be under able and skilful leadership this month, and we wish you every success.

Let me also thank you, Sir, and other delegations for the kind words about the German presidency of the Council last month, especially those expressed to Ambassador Pleuger, which I will relay to him.

My delegation is grateful for the comprehensive briefing by Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk on the situation in Bougainville. Germany commends the success achieved by the parties and the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB). We believe that Mr. Tor Stenbock and his one-person team are doing a remarkable job in the process leading to the election of the Bougainville autonomous government. It would be positive to see the mission accompanying the electoral process to its end. We also thank Mr. Noel Sinclair for his efforts for the people of Bougainville.

The adoption of the constitution will be a milestone in the process leading to the elections. We therefore welcome the work of the Bougainville Constitutional Committee, as well as the intention of the Government of Papua New Guinea to send envoys to Bougainville in order to resolve the issues outstanding in the third draft now on the table. We hope that the constitution can be adopted by the Constituent Assembly of Bougainville and approved by the Government of Papua New Guinea this summer, as has been agreed by the parties.

We commend the efforts by Papua New Guinea in setting up a ministerial committee to promote a proactive approach and to finalize the constitutional process. We also commend the assumption of political responsibility for peace and autonomy by James Tanis, Vice-President of the Bougainville People's Congress, in the Interim Provincial Government.

The success of the political process will essentially rely on completion of the disarmament programme. We therefore welcome the decision by the Peace Process Consultative Committee, chaired by the

Observer Mission, to destroy the collected weapons, as set out in Stage III of the disarmament process. We are pleased to learn from Mr. Türk that substantial progress has been made in this field. We call upon all parties to continue to remove weapons from ex-combatants, thus allowing the destruction of all illegal weapons in the country.

We welcome the decision by the Bougainville Revolutionary Army and Bougainville Resistance Force, as constructive participants in the Peace Process Consultative Committee, to agree to and participate in the destruction of all arms. We also welcome the reconciliation between the Bougainville Revolutionary Army commanders last week and hope that south Bougainville will soon join in Stage III.

We continue to encourage Francis Ona and his movement to fully join the peace process and to cooperate in all areas. In order to bring sustainable peace to a country and to yield long-term success, peace processes have to be inclusive, taking on board as many political factions as possible.

As the constitutional process leading to elections and the disarmament process seems to be making the necessary progress, it is timely for the parties and the international community also to address the social and economic problems in Bougainville.

Let me conclude by commending the efforts of New Zealand, Australia, Fiji and other Pacific countries, as well as, inter alia, the European Union and the United Nations Development Programme, for their efforts in this regard. We believe that the people of Bougainville deserve a positive perspective for their future. Only then can sustainable peace be achieved.

Mr. Maquieira (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Briefly, I wish to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Council presidency and to express appreciation for the efforts of Ambassador Pleuger and his team last month.

I appreciate your convening this open meeting on the situation in Bougainville, Sir, which demonstrates the importance the United Nations attaches to the peace process under way. I also wish to express my appreciation to the Assistant Secretary-General of the Department of Political Affairs, Mr. Danilo Türk, for his useful and thorough briefing on the development of the aforementioned peace process.

Last December we expressed our satisfaction at the completion of Stage II of the weapons disposal process, which made it possible for section 14 of the national constitution, the new Organic Law on Peace-Building and the planned referendum to enter fully into force. My delegation can note today that not only have the difficulties been overcome, but also that the progress stemming from the Peace Agreement has been very significant politically for all parties involved. We thus welcome the significant progress made and congratulate the parties for their efforts in the search for a lasting peace.

We wish to highlight particularly two aspects of post-conflict reconstruction: the weapons disposal plan and the work for the approval of the future constitution. The developments of the past five months in both areas have been encouraging. We also encourage the Bougainville Constitutional Committee to continue its work on the third and final draft, which will enable completion of the constitutional process. We also appreciate the work carried out by the United Nations Observation Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB), in the Consultative Committee and in the constant search for dialogue and integration among the parties in conflict.

We must recognize the many remaining challenges facing Bougainville, among which one could stress the need to develop the proposed constitution and especially the preparation of elections, which, according to what Mr. Türk told us this morning, would be held at the end of this year, which we welcome.

We also wish to highlight that, in order for peace to be lasting, it is necessary to establish an efficient administration and a viable and self-sustaining economy. In the meantime, the relevant United Nations bodies must continue to closely coordinate their efforts in Bougainville with the donor community to establish and consolidate peace. In that context, we appreciate the work being done in the area by the United Nations Development Programme and other specialized agencies, Australia, New Zealand, the European Union, Japan and civil society.

Finally, we wish to recognize the work done by the Department of Political Affairs, particularly Ambassador Noel Sinclair. We believe it is very important that they continue to be linked to the peace process in Bougainville until its conclusion.

Ms. Menéndez (Spain) *(spoke in Spanish)*: We too congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council. We also thank the representative of Germany for his work as President last month. We thank Mr. Danilo Türk for his briefing. We also thank Mr. Sinclair, the Representative of the Secretary-General, and his team, and we acknowledge their work.

It is encouraging to note that the weapons disposal plan is progressing apace and that 80 per cent of the weapons contained in accordance with the Bougainville Peace Agreement have been destroyed. The participation of former combatants and of communities in areas such as Panguna and southern Bougainville is welcome.

Progress has been made on the preparation of the new constitution. We hope that the Bougainville Constitutional Commission will conclude its work soon, with a view to convening the Constituent Assembly, and that the approaching deadline will be met. The same is true of the holding of free and democratic elections to elect an autonomous government in Bougainville.

The recent establishment of the Governance and Implementation Fund, with key support from Australia, is also decisive in making the elections and the establishment of an autonomous government a reality.

Nonetheless, the process must go much further. As the political process progresses, we must emphasize the rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants and the restoration of infrastructure and community services. Here, the United Nations Development Programme has a fundamental role to play. We fully trust that peace and stability will be consolidated in Bougainville so that the peace process can be truly successful.

Mr. Motoc (Romania): First, we welcome you, Sir, and congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. I also take this opportunity to commend the performance of the German presidency during the month of April.

I join other members of the Council in thanking Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk, for his briefing on the latest developments in the activities of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB).

Romania is encouraged to note the steady progress in the implementation of the peace process in Bougainville, with the effective contribution of the small, follow-on United Nations Mission. We welcome in particular the advance towards the destruction of contained weapons, and the good prospect that the entire process will be completed soon.

Good news is also related to talks between the national Government and Bougainville leaders on the finalization of the third draft of the Bougainville constitution. We encourage the parties to proceed in a timely manner with the approval of the constitution, which will mark an important step towards autonomy. We are confident that the parties will soon take a decision on the timing of elections for an autonomous government, and will make the necessary preparations in that regard, with the support of the United Nations Mission.

We further hope that progress in the political process will be followed by progress in the economic field and improvement in the living standards of the population. In our view, the transition towards an autonomous Bougainville should be synonymous with the transition towards a prosperous and stable Bougainville.

Finally, I wish to express appreciation for all the efforts undertaken by the Government of Papua New Guinea and by the Bougainville parties in the peace process. All the positive developments achieved so far are evidence of the increased capacity of the people of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville to assume full ownership of the peace process and move forward towards political normalization and economic development.

Here, I would also like to commend the role played by other countries in the region, as well as by United Nations specialized agencies and international donors in supporting the peace process and achieving good progress in Bougainville.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May. In addition, I extend our compliments to Ambassador Gunter Pleuger and his team for having successfully conducted our work throughout a very demanding programme during the month of April. I also thank Mr. Danilo Türk for presenting us with a

highly informative update on the situation in Bougainville.

Brazil welcomes the recent developments in the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement and fully supports the efforts of the United Nations to help the parties move forward with the peace process. Brazil commends the leading role of the United Nations in facilitating the implementation of the weapons disposal plan and notes with satisfaction the destruction of approximately 83 per cent of the weapons collected under stage III of the plan.

Since all components of the peace process are closely linked in their implementation, we expect that progress in the implementation of the weapons disposal plan may increase confidence among the parties and advance the process of bringing the constitutional amendment and the Organic Law on Peace-Building in Bougainville into full operation.

Only the maintenance of the rule of law and the promotion of justice can bring about a true process of national reconciliation. In that regard, we welcome the steps taken to finalize arrangements to improve policing and access to courts, and the increasing availability of correctional services in Bougainville. Moreover, the international community must continue to give due priority to the need for reintegration of former combatants into civilian life.

We urge the parties to consolidate the advances obtained so far and to expedite their work on the third and final draft of the constitution, with a view to completing all stages of the constitutional process as soon as possible. We also hope that they overcome their differences and provide the conditions necessary for the preparation of free general elections in the island in the near future.

The fact that discussions related to post-conflict issues in Bougainville are gradually replacing security concerns should be seen as a sign of progress towards a self-sustaining peace and a transition to autonomy in Bougainville.

Brazil commends the Pacific Islands Forum for its efforts to overcome the conflict and to help maintain law and order in the region. As an important forum for political consultation and cooperation, its role in the conduct of the process should be acknowledged and praised. We believe that the Security Council should encourage regional cooperation and assistance, as regional partners are often more likely to conceive and promote solutions to common problems in line with their particular environment.

It is our view that the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) should continue to facilitate interaction and coordination among the people of Bougainville — including former combatants — the United Nations, the Government of Papua New Guinea and other major international stakeholders.

Brazil understands that a United Nations presence on the ground is essential to ensure stabilization. Nevertheless, the success of the implementation of the Peace Agreement relies, as always, on the will and commitment of the parties themselves.

Mr. Duclos (France) *(spoke in French)*: First, I thank the German delegation for its excellent work last month as President of the Council. I convey to you, Sir, our congratulations and best wishes for the Pakistani presidency this month. I also wish to thank Mr. Danilo Türk for his clear and comprehensive briefing.

What struck us in that account is the fact that things are now moving in the right direction. The establishment of autonomous institutions has been speeded up, the collection of weapons is to be completed soon and the Constitution should soon be adopted. That will be a decisive stage with respect to the elections, which could be held before the end of the year.

Admittedly, there are still concerns. I am thinking in particular of the security situation, which is still precarious. I would recall that the Bougainville police forces are still rather small and have not yet received sufficient training to cope with the situation. But it is undeniable that the overall development of the situation in Bougainville is satisfactory.

The question facing us today is, what will happen to the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville after 30 June? It seems to us that it is still a little early to take a decision in that respect. We await with interest the report of the Secretariat fact-finding team that will visit in June. However, we believe that the international community should continue its efforts in three areas: first, support for the transition in Bougainville; secondly, preparations for elections; and thirdly, assistance for development.

I cannot conclude this brief statement without commending the work done by Ambassador Noel

Sinclair in heading the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville and that of his successor, Mr. Stenbock.

Mr. Baja (Philippines): Let me reiterate, Sir, in this first open meeting of the Council for this month, our congratulations to you on your assumption of the presidency for this month, as well as to the German presidency for its excellent stewardship of the Council last month.

My delegation is also grateful to Assistant Secretary- General Danilo Türk for his comprehensive and informative briefing on the developments in the Bougainville peace process under the continued political presence of the United Nations through the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville, and for the letter from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Papua New Guinea. It shows us the fruits of the efforts exerted by the parties in moving the peace process forward to establish a stable and self-sustaining autonomous Government in Bougainville.

We particularly welcome the encouraging results described in the report, particularly the progress that has been achieved in the implementation of the agreement to destroy the collected weapons; the simultaneous progress in the constitutional process that is being achieved as Papua New Guinea and Bougainville iron out remaining issues in finalizing the draft of the Constitution; the increasing delegation of powers and functions to the Bougainville Interim Provincial Government, particularly of policing functions; and the building of civil and political structures, particularly in the law and justice sector, in Bougainville.

The agreement reached by the Peace Process Consultative Committee to destroy all contained weapons as stage III of the weapons disposal plan shortly after the last open debate on this issue, held in this very Chamber, was indeed a very positive development. It acted as the catalyst to increase the momentum in the political and constitutional process. My delegation looks forward to the positive prospect of completion of all stages of the constitutional process before the end of next month.

A stable environment and the finalization of the constitutional process leading to the adoption of the Constitution will provide the conditions necessary to start preparations for the holding of the elections for an autonomous Government. Recent developments bring us ever closer to that goal.

In view of such developments, together with the practical rehabilitation programmes in the economic and social field being conducted by other United Nations agencies, the peace process is expected to further mature. These are additional building-blocks to further consolidate the peace process.

It is also important to acknowledge the vital contribution that the other countries in the region have provided, and are continuing to provide, to advance the peace process. This will be even more important in the days ahead to sustain the momentum for Bougainville's development towards a stable political future.

When the final chapter of the story of Bougainville has been written, it will be a tale of how dialogue and cooperation among all parties and stakeholders and the United Nations led to the success of the process there — a success which is now on the horizon. My delegation will support the measures that the United Nations will undertake to bring about the final realization of that success.

Mr. Zhang Yishan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I should like to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council this month. I am confident that, under your excellent leadership, the Security Council will successfully complete its work. I wish also to thank Ambassador Pleuger and the German delegation for the outstanding work they did during the German presidency last month. Let me also thank the Assistant Secretary-General, Mr. Türk, for his informative briefing on the latest developments in the Bougainville peace process. We appreciate the work done by the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB).

Since the signing of the Bougainville Peace Agreement, major progress has been achieved in the Bougainville peace process, which is now at a crucial juncture. The parties to the Peace Agreement have accomplished a great deal in terms of collecting and destroying weapons, and the process will soon be completed.

The Bougainville Constitution has already reached the phase of final consultations and drafting and will soon be submitted to the Government of Papua New Guinea for approval. These positive developments are very encouraging.

China appreciates the political goodwill demonstrated by the Government of Papua New Guinea and by other parties to the Bougainville peace process. We hope that all parties will continue their efforts fully to implement the Peace Agreement and to achieve, as soon as possible, lasting peace and stability in Bougainville.

We support UNOMB's continued monitoring and implementation of the Peace Agreement with a view to ensuring the success of the Bougainville peace process. We also appeal to the United Nations agencies concerned and to donor countries to provide assistance in the framework of the post-conflict reconstruction of Bougainville and to help the local authorities in the area of capacity-building and accelerate the reintegration of ex-combatants.

Mr. Gaspar Martins (Angola): I join previous speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council and also in congratulating Ambassador Gunter Pleuger and the German delegation for their excellent work during their presidency of the Council during the very busy month of April.

I should like also to express appreciation to Mr. Danilo Türk for his comprehensive presentation, for the progress achieved in the Bougainville peace process and for the good prospects for tackling the challenges ahead.

My delegation welcomes the progress achieved in the three crucial areas of the Bougainville peace process: the disposal of weapons, the constitutional process and the future political status of the Bougainville islands. We noted with satisfaction that the third stage of the weapons disposal plan is moving forward satisfactorily, and we hope that this process can be concluded by the end of June, thereby ensuring a Bougainville free of weapons and the sustainability of the peace process.

The delegation of police functions and powers pursuant to the Bougainville Peace Agreement, the strengthening of the law and justice sector and public administration, and the progress made in the negotiation of a draft constitution for the autonomous Bougainville Government are remarkable achievements to be credited to the people of Papua New Guinea and to the Bougainvilleans. While the progress attained is encouraging, the successful implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement will require further efforts to conclude the constitutional process and to create a level of security conducive to the holding of elections. In this regard, we commend the efforts deployed by the Government of Papua New Guinea and its commitment to implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

At this crucial stage of the peace process, economic and social development is among the priorities for the achievement of a lasting and sustainable peace. We encourage the donor community to assist Bougainville in creating the needed infrastructure and opportunities for economic recovery and development in order to support autonomy and strengthen peace and prosperity for all. The role played by the international community, and particularly by the neighbouring countries, in providing financial and technical support for post-conflict peace-building and the development of Bougainville is to be commended.

In the present context, the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville enjoys the best political conditions for continuing to assist the Government of Papua New Guinea and Bougainville to fully implement the Peace Agreement, to hold elections and to achieve the ultimate goal of the establishment of an autonomous Government in Bougainville. My delegation is confident that the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville will continue to work closely with the United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations bodies to advance the peace-building process in Bougainville.

Mr. Adechi (Benin) (*spoke in French*): Like preceding speakers, I congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council.

I should also like to thank Ambassador Gunter Pleuger and his team for the excellent work done last month. I further thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his presentation and for his very useful description of the situation in Bougainville.

We welcome the progress made in the peace process, in the military sphere and in the political dialogue. We welcome the efforts of the parties, particularly the Government of Papua New Guinea, to achieve the compromises essential to reaching the concrete results that have just been described to us. Those efforts must be relentlessly pursued in order to bring the peace and normalization process to a successful conclusion with regard to the remaining challenges ahead in establishing lasting stability on the

island. Those challenges include, inter alia, making Bougainville a weapon-free zone, finalizing the constitution in order to create a system of autonomy in Bougainville, and verifying the constitutionality of such autonomy as soon as possible. It is also necessary to resolve problems linked to the effective exercise of police powers by the provincial autonomous Government of Bougainville, including through the reinforcement of the staff and logistical capacities of the Bougainville police units and the establishment of the security conditions necessary for the holding of regional elections in Bougainville, now scheduled for late 2004.

Given such challenges, we urge those former combatants who remain outside the peace process to renounce violence and immediately to join in the efforts of the international community with a view to completing the peace process successfully.

We welcome all initiatives to consolidate the achievements made to date. The notification of imminent consultations in the framework of the political process is a positive sign of which we take note. We support in particular the strengthening the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement programme. In that regard, we are pleased to note that measures to promote the rehabilitation and reintegration of former combatants take account of the need to counter social exclusion so as to strengthen the island's social cohesion and to ensure sustainable development there. Similarly, we urge that steps be taken to promote post-conflict reconciliation. We thank the donor countries and international organizations that finance relevant programmes there.

Finally, we pay a well-deserved tribute to the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville and its staff for their excellent work with the parties and neighbours of the subregion. The reasons offered by the Government of Papua New Guinea in support of the request to extend the mandate of the Mission until the end of 2004 are a testament to its credibility. We support that request, which reflects a well-defined exit strategy and leaves behind solid democratic institutions, as has often been recommended by the Council.

Mr. King (United Kingdom): Through you, Sir, we would like to take this opportunity to thank the German presidency for its work last month. Like others, we offer you best wishes for this month.

We are grateful for today's debate and for Mr. Türk's briefing. The United Kingdom congratulates all those in-country, from the region and others involved on the progress achieved so far in the peace process. This progress is a testament to the determination of the Bougainville parties to move the peace process forward, with the assistance of the reconfigured United Nations Mission led by Mr. Stenbock. Like others, we would like to take this opportunity to recognize also the work of his predecessor, Mr. Sinclair.

We welcome the fact that, as we have heard, a significant percentage of weapons have been destroyed under the weapons disposal plan; that several districts are now clear of weapons; that the work on the constitution is moving ahead; and that there has been progress in police training, even if that remains a priority. That said, it is clear from some recent incidents, such as the theft of sealed weapons, that continued determination and vigilance, as well as continued international support, will be required over the coming months to keep up the momentum in the face of any setbacks.

Finally, we welcome and support the aim of the Government and others in Papua New Guinea to work towards elections for a new Government in the time frame indicated by Mr. Türk.

Mr. Smirnov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We would like to welcome and congratulate you, Sir, on Pakistan's assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. We also thank Ambassador Pleuger and the German delegation for their successful handling of the Council's work in April.

We are grateful to Assistant Secretary-General Türk for the detailed information he has given us on developments in the situation in Bougainville and the work of the United Nations Observer Mission there.

The Russian delegation is pleased that the political process continues to move ahead in accordance with the Bougainville Peace Agreement. We welcome the commitment of the Government of Papua New Guinea and the Bougainville communities to continuing to demonstrate a firm political will and to comply with the principal agreements. We also appreciate their efforts to find agreed and mutually

acceptable solutions within the context of the peace process.

We are pleased that the two sides have completed work on the second draft of a constitution and are preparing a third and final draft. We hope that this new momentum in the Bougainville constitutional process will make it possible to complete work on the constitution by the end of next month, as scheduled.

We welcome the principled decision by the Bougainville communities to destroy all contained weapons, and we welcome too the progress made in that area. We believe that complete implementation of the programme to collect and destroy weapons held by former combatants is essential to strengthening peace and stability on the island.

It will be impossible to reach a lasting settlement unless the peace process includes all those who are now outside the process. We note the efforts by the Government, the Bougainville parties and the United Nations Observer Mission to ensure that the peace process is fully inclusive. We welcome the post-conflict peace-building support provided by the United Nations Development Programme, other United Nations agencies and the broad donor community. We are aware too that regional bodies have played a substantial role in the peace process and in fostering economic and social development in Bougainville.

The Russian delegation greatly appreciates the work being done by the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville; we believe that its role in the peace process is extremely important. We are willing to participate constructively in Security Council discussions on any recommendation on the future of that mission that might be made following the forthcoming visit to Bougainville.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Pakistan.

I thank Assistant Secretary-General Danilo Türk for his briefing. I also warmly welcome the participation in today's meeting of the Permanent Representative of Papua New Guinea.

Pakistan appreciates the facilitating role that the United Nations, first through its Political Office and now through its Observer Mission in Bougainville, has played over the past few years. We acknowledge the work of Mr. Noel Sinclair and his successor. We also commend the efforts of all parties which have sought to implement a peaceful solution to the conflict in that territory. We appreciate in particular the courageous decisions and strong commitment to peace of the Government of Papua New Guinea. That has been crucial in the implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. Pakistan urges the parties to keep up the momentum to complete the constitutional and electoral processes in a timely manner.

It is indeed heartening to hear Assistant Secretary-General Türk describe this as a success story for the international community. We urge the donor community to contribute generously, not only to the financing of the peace process but also to promoting long-term economic and social development to sustain peace.

The United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, prior to the expiry of its mandate, had overseen completion of stage II of the weapons disposal plan in July 2003. That was a crucial step in triggering the constitutional process which is currently under way. This also prepares the ground for holding elections for an autonomous government in Bougainville by the end of 2004, as well as for the eventual holding of a referendum in accordance with the provisions of the Lincoln and Arawa agreements.

The present mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) provides for the completion of its outstanding tasks. Those tasks include the destruction of weapons under stage III of the weapons disposal plan, the monitoring of the constitutional process and facilitating talks between the parties and building confidence between them. There is also need to bring the faction of Francis Ona into the peace process. Completion of those important tasks needs to be supported by the international community and the Security Council.

Given the critical stage of the implementation of the peace process that lies ahead, Pakistan fully supports the extension of UNOMB's mandate for another year. We are confident that this will enhance the realization of the objectives of peace, to which both the parties in Bougainville and the Government of Papua New Guinea have committed themselves.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The next speaker is the representative of Papua New Guinea, on whom I now call.

Mr. Aisi (Papua New Guinea): Thank you, Mr. President, for your warm welcome. Like previous speakers, I would like to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I wish you and your Mission well. Through you, Sir, I would like also to thank and compliment Ambassador Pleuger and his Mission with respect to their able oversight of the work of the Council last month.

I thank Mr. Türk for his report and for his support over the past few years in the work we are doing. Those thanks go also to his staff.

Papua New Guinea sincerely appreciates the interest the United Nations takes in the Bougainville peace process and the practical support it provides through the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) and in other ways. On behalf of all of the parties, my delegation expresses our sincere thanks to the Council for its positive and creative response to Papua New Guinea's request, made on behalf of all of the parties late last year, for UNOMB to remain and continue supporting the Bougainville peace process on the ground.

In the past few months, the Bougainville peace process has passed a number of significant milestones on the way to self-sustaining peace. They include the withdrawal of the last in a series of neutral regional supports for the peace process: the Bougainville Transition Team, made up of unarmed civilians, women and men, from Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Vanuatu.

At the end of February, the parties said farewell to a trusted, good friend who had worked very hard in support of the peace process and who had helped build mutual confidence between the parties over the previous five years. The departing Director of the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville, His Excellency Ambassador Noel Sinclair, left with the sincere admiration and thanks of people throughout Papua New Guinea for having met the diverse challenges of his assignment with commitment and distinction.

The parties were then pleased to receive UNOMB and its new Director, Mr. Tor Stenbock, whose prior service, both in other peace processes and in Bougainville, had already earned respect and a very warm welcome to his new appointment on all sides.

Before either of those two transitions had occurred, the peace process passed one of the most significant milestones on the way to lasting peace when the Peace Process Consultative Committee met in December and resolved that the guns contained under the agreed weapons disposal plan would be destroyed. The meeting was held within the time frame set in the plan, which forms part of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. The agreed outcome is clear: the guns must be rendered so they "cannot be used again, recovered, repaired, used for spare parts, or employed ... to make or support threats".

With UNOMB's inspiration and support, implementation has been truly impressive. Former combatants have displayed real determination in putting away and destroying their guns. By the last week of April, we estimate that more than 80 per cent — the figure of 83 per cent has been mentioned, and we will take that higher amount — of guns contained under the agreed weapons disposal plan had been destroyed. Guns which were removed from containers in 2002 continue to be recovered and then destroyed. Former combatants from the remaining "no-go zone" around Panguna are joining in. The prospects for completing the process in the next few weeks are strong.

That does not mean that Bougainville will be completely free of the presence and the threat of guns. But the main former combatant groups will have contained and destroyed their guns. The way will be clear for holding free and democratic elections for the autonomous Bougainville government, to be set up under the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

All of the parties involved in the Bougainville peace process continue to urge Francis Ona and his successors in the "no-go zone" around Panguna in central Bougainville to eliminate the psychological barriers, remove the remaining roadblocks and join in working for lasting peace by peaceful means.

Progress towards that objective is supported by the efforts being made to strengthen policing and other aspects of civil authority on the ground, including courts and correctional services. Those efforts include the delegation of significant police functions and powers from the national Government to Bougainville, as provided for in the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Australia and New Zealand give valued financial and technical support for strengthening policing in

Bougainville, including the training of both additional general duties police and community auxiliary police. The recent establishment of the Governance and Implementation Fund provides a means by which they and other foreign aid donors can contribute to practical peace-building in Bougainville by helping to provide resources for implementation of a jointly developed work plan which is supported by the national Government and the Bougainville administration. Priorities include promoting awareness and building capacity, both nationally and in Bougainville, to make sure that the arrangements for Bougainville autonomy develop and operate as agreed.

Currently, consultations intended to promote a cooperative approach in drafting and implementing the proposed constitution for the autonomous Bougainville government are moving ahead. In fact, members of the bipartisan national committee led by the Minister for Inter-Government Relations, Sir Peter Barter, are in Bougainville this week to meet and exchange views with the Bougainville Constitutional Commission. The Commission is expected to complete its third and final draft of the proposed Bougainville constitution later this month. The Bougainville leadership has already agreed to arrangements for the Bougainville Constituent Assembly, which will convene to consider and adopt the draft constitution as soon as the Commission completes the final draft.

Consultations are open, smooth and productive. It is expected that by the middle of the year the final draft of the proposed Bougainville constitution will be ready for the National Executive Council to endorse its consistency with the national Constitution as amended by the laws implementing the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

In that context, let me again draw the Council's attention to the agreement, given the force of law in the Papua New Guinea Constitution, that, if there are differences over whether conditions are conducive to holding elections for the autonomous Bougainville government, they will be referred to UNOMB for resolution. The constitutional provisions, which may well be unique in the world, make it critical to the Bougainville peace process -- and for the sake of respect of good governance under our national Constitution — that UNOMB remain on the ground until the autonomous Bougainville government has been elected.

Until then, UNOMB also has an important role to play in continuing to chair the Peace Process Consultative Committee, the main body in which the parties meet to consult and cooperate in managing the Bougainville peace process until the autonomous Bougainville government has been elected. The autonomous Bougainville government will then assume responsibility as the legitimate representative of the people of Bougainville under the agreed arrangements. The establishment of the autonomous Bougainville government will mark a natural exit-point for UNOMB. That has been agreed and is understood by all parties.

While foreign aid donors will continue to provide technical and financial assistance, the parties will otherwise be directly and solely responsible from then on for future peace-building and governance under the Bougainville Peace Agreement.

Practical peace-building involves more than making and implementing political agreements. It also has very significant economic and social dimensions. As our Minister for Inter-Government Relations, Sir Peter Barter, has said, Bougainville needs to develop an economy capable of sustaining autonomy. It needs a society which sustains peace. In that respect, UNOMB continues to make an important contribution by promoting reconciliation.

The United Nations Development Programme and other United Nations specialized agencies, such as UNICEF, support practical peace-building in other important ways. Those include providing a wide range of opportunities — from training to providing seedlings — so that former combatants and communities can participate in, and benefit from, development on the basis of self-reliance. Papua New Guinea, on behalf of all parties, appreciates our overseas partners' continuing support and cooperation.

The Government is determined to take a proactive approach. That is why the Cabinet has decided to set up a new ministerial committee to plan and implement a vision for a Bougainville that remains at peace. In striving to define that vision of peace and mobilize resources for it, Papua New Guinea will continue to look to the United Nations for continued help and support. That includes a response from the Security Council when, at the appropriate time, Papua New Guinea makes a formal request for UNOMB to

continue until it fulfils its agreed responsibilities and the autonomous Bougainville government is elected.

The Secretariat mission that is expected to travel to Papua New Guinea in June to review the Bougainville peace process can help ensure free and democratic elections for the autonomous Bougainville government by being tasked and equipped to advise on what is required to ensure that UNOMB can do what its mandate requires.

Papua New Guinea is grateful for the continuing support of United Nations specialized agencies and other development cooperation partners. We encourage them to continue providing assistance for Bougainville and the rest of our country so that peace is secured and all of our people can enjoy the benefits of lasting peace, achieved, strengthened and maintained by peaceful means.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of New Zealand. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. MacKay (New Zealand): Let me echo the congratulations and best wishes expressed to you, Sir, on your presidency, along with the thanks expressed to Ambassador Pleuger.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum members represented at the United Nations: Australia, Fiji, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu and my own country, New Zealand.

The Pacific Islands Forum group welcomes the continued progress towards peace and prosperity on Bougainville. We especially welcome the high level of weapons destruction and the number of large and important reconciliation ceremonies held recently, which is a very positive sign.

We wish to acknowledge the positive role the United Nations Observer Mission is playing in relation to this. I should like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Türk for his comments this morning and also to thank him and the staff of the Department of Political Affairs here in New York for their continued input and focus on Bougainville.

At the same time, members of our group remain conscious that there are still many weapons at large in the community, and we urge all parties to continue working to remove them.

This is a significant juncture for Bougainville. Important progress has been made thanks to the hard work of the Papua New Guinea Government and Bougainvillean representatives. We welcome, for example, the recent announcement by Sir Peter Barter of a Papua New Guinea Government ministerial committee to promote a proactive Government approach to Bougainville. More remains to be done, of course, particularly in the build-up to Bougainville's elections.

We encourage the Papua New Guinea Government and Bougainvillean leaders to move ahead with those preparations as soon as possible to build on the good faith shown by all parties in fostering progress in the peace process. Obviously, the international community remains willing to assist. We would support the extension of the United Nations Observer Mission for a limited time to assist with the preparations, as envisaged in the Bougainville Peace Agreement. I should like to thank those Council members who, in their statements this morning, have also expressed support for an extension of UNOMB's mandate. We hope that that will be readily agreed upon in the Council.

The Pacific Islands Forum group has maintained for some time that Bougainville is ready to move on from the formal peace process to a new focus on law and order and economic development. Recent progress has vindicated that confidence. Of course, the autonomy envisaged in the Bougainville Peace Agreement will be sustainable only with appropriate and affordable institutions, underpinned by economic growth.

It is important for Bougainvilleans, and the rest of Papua New Guinea, to know that the international community remains engaged in their future — again, a number of other Council members have made the same point this morning. Regional partners, including Australia and New Zealand, have been extensively involved for some time in economic and social development projects and in capacity-building. The joint Australia-New Zealand strategy for law and justice has included the training of new recruits for the autonomous Bougainville police force — 50 of whom

are expected to graduate and to be deployed to Bougainville at the end of June — as well as a range of coordination and infrastructure projects. From New Zealand's national perspective, we are especially pleased that, along with support for village courts, work has started on the third phase of the New Zealand community policing project.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Japan. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Haraguchi (Japan): Allow me, first of all, to express my appreciation for the comprehensive briefing provided by the Secretariat on the situation in Bougainville. Japan is very pleased to note that, in the period since the United Nations Political Office in Bougainville was reorganized into the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) last December, the Mission has continued its activities in an efficient and effective manner. Let me also take this opportunity to say that we highly appreciate the positive role that Ambassador Noel Sinclair played as the head of the United Nations Mission in Bougainville until the end of February this year.

The Bougainville peace process has entered its final and most critical stage, both politically and militarily. The current tasks are to formulate the Bougainville constitution and to collect and destroy weapons. We understand that the constitutional Commission is currently working on the constitution's final draft. It is our hope that the Commission will be able to finalize its work quickly and report to the Government of Papua New Guinea with a view to the Government's speedy endorsement of the draft Constitution.

Japan welcomes the report that, through the voluntary cooperation of the people of Bougainville, 80 per cent of collected weapons have already been destroyed. We are somewhat worried, however, about the report that a considerable number of weapons were recently stolen from a Government weapons repository. Although we understand that such a theft is an exceptional occurrence, we wish to express our hope that the weapons disposal work will be completed expeditiously so that there will be no recurrence of that kind of unfortunate incident.

My Government would also like to emphasize that, as the expiration date of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville is fast approaching, it is essential for the people of Bougainville to exercise their ownership by accelerating the peace process. On that point, we have been pleased at how positively the people of Bougainville have responded to the work of weapons disposal. Japan, for its part, intends to continue to extend the bilateral assistance in the areas of education, public health and transportation infrastructure that it began to carry out last October. It is our hope that that bilateral assistance will improve daily life and strengthen the economy so that the people of Bougainville will be able to stand on their own feet.

The mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville is scheduled to expire at the end of June. For the sake of the consolidation of peace in Bougainville, we are fully aware of the necessity of a long-term commitment, including economic development assistance on the part of the international community. At the same time, however, Japan maintains the position that the mandate of any United Nations political mission should be limited to the period deemed necessary to complete the mission's assigned goals. We therefore strongly hope that, in the period between now and the end of June, UNOMB will further intensify its work so that it will be able to fulfil its mission as completely as possible in the time remaining.

The President: The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of Fiji. I invite him to take a seat at the Council table and to make his statement.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): My delegation joins others in congratulating you, Sir, on assuming the Security Council presidency for May. We also thank your predecessor, Ambassador Pleuger.

Fiji aligns itself with the statement that was presented by New Zealand on behalf of the Pacific Islands Forum.

The question of Bougainville is very close to Fiji, both in the context of the regional peace process and culturally. We are heartened by the steady progress of the Bougainville peace process, as it has a direct impact on the security of our region. A concern is the possibility that the problems of Bougainville, if not properly addressed, will spill over to neighbouring countries. Conversely, stability and the settlement of Bougainville's problems would augur well for its neighbours.

The Papua New Guinea Ministerial Committee on Bougainville was established to look beyond the current stage of the Bougainville peace process and to coordinate planning and implementation of the National Government's responsibilities in Bougainville for the medium and long term. That Papua New Guinea initiative complements the exit strategy of the United Nations in that it will continue the Bougainville peace process when the United Nations mandate finally ends, thus — to put it simply — adding value to the stability achieved. Until the exit date finally arrives, the role of the United Nations in promoting good governance and sustainable peace-building is absolutely essential.

The Bougainville authorities — under the able leadership of the Governor, the Honourable John Momis, and ably supported by the newly appointed Vice-President, James Tanis — are to be commended for their support of the "from the bottom up" approach of the peace process. That approach involves representation in the process from all sectors and proceeding through consultation and cooperation, based on public awareness and commitment by all parties to the orderly achievement of agreed outcomes with all deliberate speed.

The continued support of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville (UNOMB) for the peace process has been a steadying influence, and the firm direction proffered by its former Director, Ambassador Noel Sinclair, is much appreciated by all parties.

Fiji supports all efforts towards finding sustainable peace for our region. While security from conflict is a commendable first step, it has to be accompanied by plans and programmes that address the economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems afflicting the people. Issues such as water, sanitation, human settlements and the exploitation of women, youth and children are some of those that need to be properly considered. Here, we commend Australia and New Zealand for their efforts in the region towards that end.

We lend our support to the efforts of Papua New Guinea and to its request for United Nations assistance; we trust that the Security Council will give it its favourable consideration.

The President: I shall now give the floor to Mr. Danilo Türk to respond to some of the comments that have been made.

Mr. Türk: I would like to express appreciation for the comments made by the members of the Security Council who have expressed support for the work of the United Nations Observer Mission in Bougainville. I would like to assure members that the content of this discussion will be conveyed to the Mission in all of its aspects, including those that relate to some of the recent difficulties. We will be continuing our efforts to complete the work of the Mission successfully.

I would also like to mention that today, when we find ourselves in a situation of successful continuation and when we are close to the completion of our work, we have to be aware that this work relates to a past conflict of considerable proportions: almost 15,000 people were reported to have been killed during the armed conflict in Bougainville years ago. That is the magnitude that we have to keep in mind. Every effort must be made to ensure the successful completion of the current stage of the peace process.

In that context, a particularly important aspect will be placing increasing emphasis on long-term assistance. You yourself, Mr. President, referred to that aspect, and so did many other members of the Security Council. We have taken careful note of that and will give further thought to it. We will continue to appreciate the work being done and assistance being offered by the countries in the region. There may be new ideas that we will be able to discuss with the Security Council in the coming period.

Obviously, the work is not yet done. We are very close to the successful completion of this process, but we have not completed it as yet, and the Security Council would be well advised to pay further attention in the future to the peace process in Bougainville.

The President: I thank the Assistant Secretary-General for those remarks.

There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.